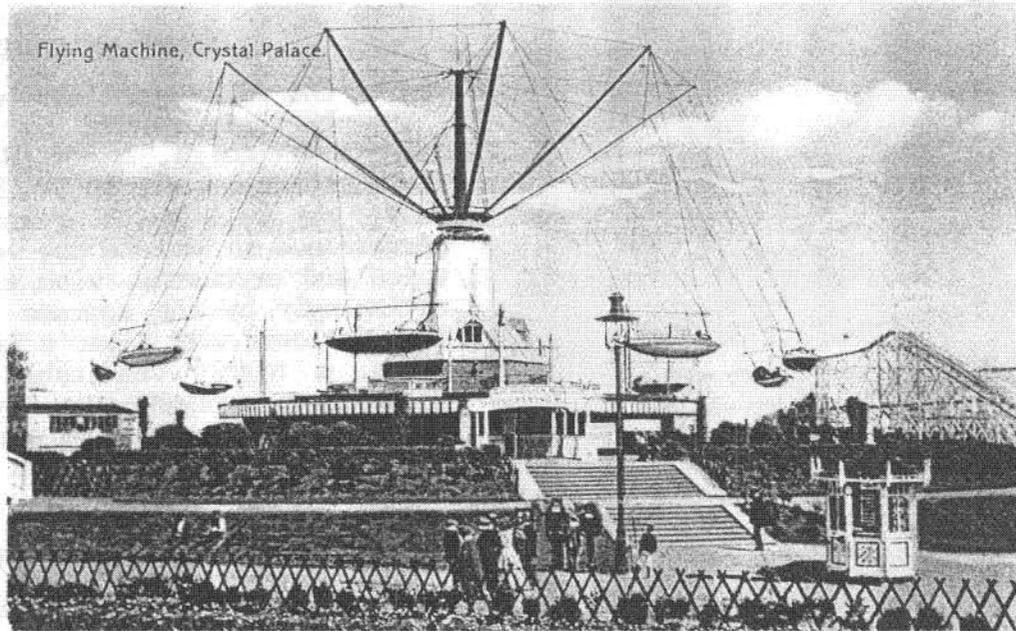


Friends of West Norwood Cemetery

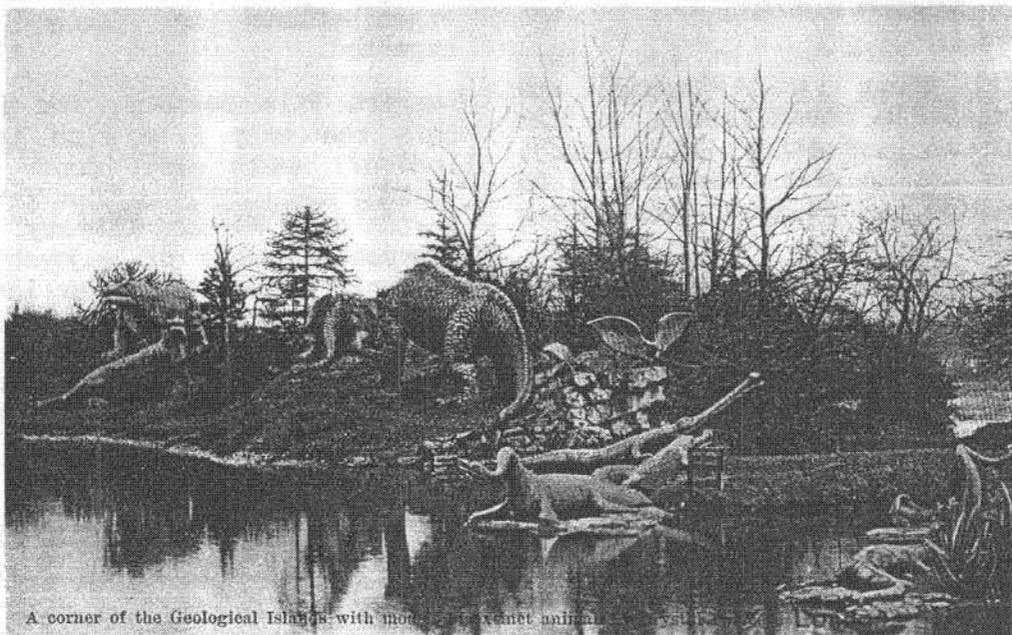


NEWSLETTER NO 7: AUGUST 1991



Flying Machine, Crystal Palace

Two new colour postcards available from our Publications Officer, price 30p. Sir Hiram Maxim invented the flying machine; the existence of dinosaurs, like the models still visible in Crystal Palace Park, was the discovery of Gideon Mantell. Now that the GPO is issuing a stamp commemorating the discovery, perhaps they could consider a stamp for Mantell himself?



A corner of the Geological Islands with models of extinct animals

FOWNC OFFICERS (No: we're not all dinosaurs!)

Chairman and Newsletter Editor: Nicholas Reed, 26 Hichisson Road, SE15 3AL; tel: 071-732 7778. Vice-Chairman and Publications Officer: Bob Flanagan, 79 Durban Road, SE27 9RW; tel: 081-670 3265. Hon Treasurer: David Comber, 170 Knights Hill, SE27 OSR; tel: 081-761 3996. Membership Sec: Rosemary Comber, to whom the £2 Annual Subscription can be sent.

WEST NORWOOD NEWS

As most of our membership is based in West Norwood, but may not be fully aware of all which that suburb has to offer, we shall try to cover some of these activities in future Newsletters.

LAMBETH ORCHESTRA

One of the well-established events here is the concert given every few months by the Lambeth Orchestra, in St. Luke's Church. Their recent concert at St. Luke's, on 1st June, was well worth attending, with a performance of *Nuits d'Ete* by Berlioz, for voice and orchestra, with the poems sung ravishingly by the soprano Jane Webster. They followed with Elgar's First Symphony: again, a highly creditable performance. Their last concert was given somewhere over the river, but we hope to report their next concert, given on home ground.

LAMBETH COUNTRY SHOW

As readers will know, this Show was eventually held at the end of July this year, after being officially cancelled. Our own stall was immensely successful both in attracting new members, and selling our literature. One of the many delights of the show is finding out about organisations in Lambeth one never expected.

Lambeth Film Society, for instance, (is this the only film club left in South London?) meets every month, normally on Tuesday evenings, in the Nettlefold Hall inside West Norwood Library. They show an impressive range of enjoyable and often historic films: eighteen last year, for example, including *Dangerous Liaisons*, *The Red Shoes*, *Viridiana* and so on. Details of next year's season, starting in September, from their Chairman at 20 Ivymount Road, SE27 ONB (081-761 1527).

FUNERALS WITHOUT GOD?

It is a curious fact that while few babies are now christened, and more than half of marriages are secular, 95% of all burials are Christian. Could this be because one cannot get buried through a Register Office? Whatever the reason, a new booklet with the above title has appeared proposing a format, and possible suitable poems, for non-religious funerals. Copies available from Nicholas Reed, price £3.

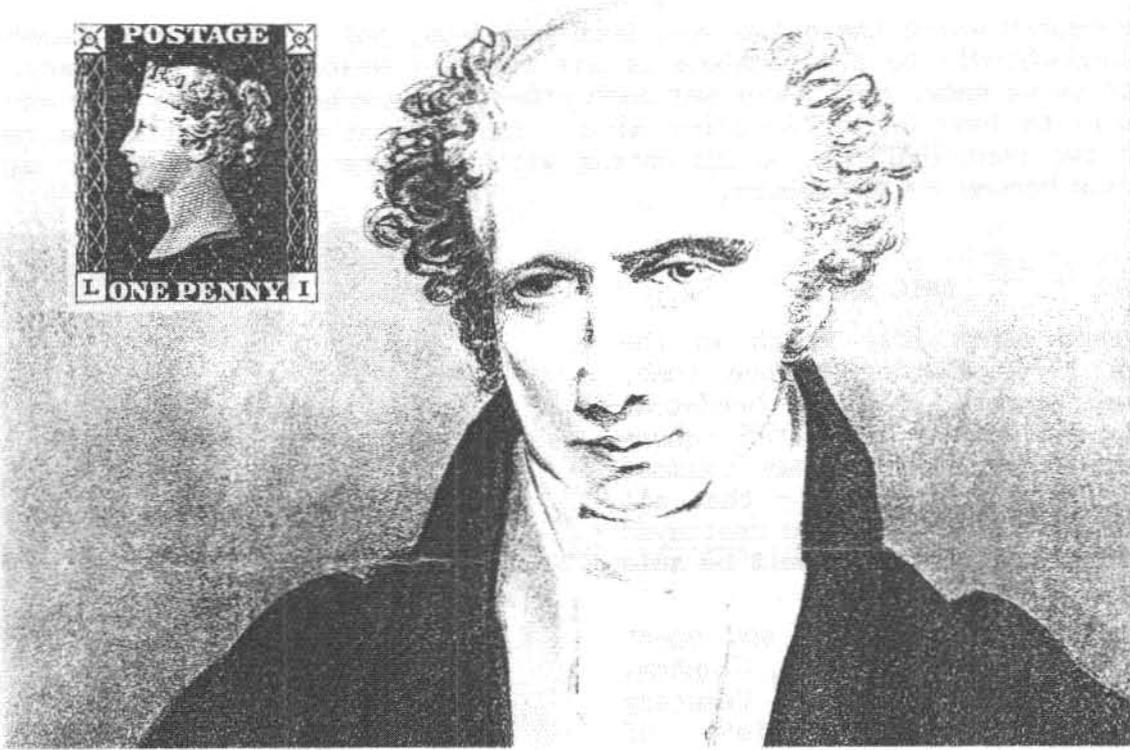


BRIXTON WINDMILL

On Monday 25th November, at 8pm, there will be a talk about Brixton Windmill, and other windmills in South London, to the Brixton Society (and others interested). Let us hope the speaker concentrates on Brixton Windmill, as it is an outstanding case for action.

It has now been impossible to visit it (apart from looking at the outside) for more than ten years. Yet it has a full set of machinery inside. Being only three miles from central London, it would be an ideal potential educational resource, one would feel, but Lambeth still leave it deserted and unattended. Indeed, many locals have not even seen it: off Brixton Hill, and just down the road from the Prison: entrance through Blenheim Gardens. What a contrast from Wimbledon, where there is now a detailed and fascinating museum inside the old windmill building.

Why not come to this meeting, organised by the Brixton Society, and suggest what we could do to allow the public to visit Brixton Windmill again? Venue: Bon Marche Building, 444 Brixton Road: entrance in



TWO DISTINGUISHED MEDALLISTS

buried in West Norwood Cemetery

On Saturday 16th November, at 2.30 pm, we have an illustrated talk about William Wyon, and Maria Cassavetti. It will be given by Philip Attwood, a local resident who is also a Keeper in the Dept. of Coins and Medals in the British Museum.

William Wyon has become better known since the 150th Anniversary of the Penny Black stamp last year. Wyon designed the medallion of the young Queen Victoria, the design of which was copied for the Penny Black. He was Chief Engraver to her Majesty's Mint, as his tomb in Square 33 proudly boasts, and one of a dynasty of Wyon royal engravers.

Women artists were of course thoroughly disapproved of in Victorian times: how unladylike to paint, rather than embroider! It is only now that the women's movement has brought to light just what fine artists some of them were.

Maria Cassavetti, was born of Greek parents in Tulse Hill in 1843. She was related to the Ionides family, now best known for their fine picture collection in Orleans House in Twickenham. Maria became the friend first, of the pre-Raphaelite Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and then of Edward Burne-Jones. She served as a model (among other things, no doubt!) for both painters, but also became a considerable painter in her own right. She then started making medallions, some of them

depicting her friends, including her cousin Marie Stillman.

She married a Greek, Dr Zambaco, but the marriage did not last, so she returned to England, and eventually went to France, in a vain attempt to become Assistant to Rodin. She died there in 1914, but her body was brought back to Norwood, where it now lies in one of the magnificent Greek tombs. Not listed, as yet, but it's the one near the entrance, with a woman (Marie herself?) abandoning herself across the sarcophagus.

Such are the bare bones of her life (and death!): it sounds a fascinating story. But will our members attend it? The attendance at our last lecture was very low: just twelve people, out of our 120 members, came to hear what by common consent was the best lecture we've yet had: Louise Irvine talking about Doulton in Lambeth. Unless attendance at our next lecture is much higher, we shall have to restrict them to about one every three months.

The talk by Philip Attwood will be at a new venue: the Meeting Room in Chatsworth Baptist Church, Chatsworth Way, West Norwood SE27. The Church is a short walk off Norwood Road, and its entrance is just past the junction with Idmiston Road, in Chatsworth Way itself. Our new venue has unlimited parking, comfortable seating, efficient heating, good acoustics and refreshments afterwards. Please come along for this talk!

The research which these two men, both now dead, put in to Norwood Cemetery, will undoubtedly be the backbone of all future research on the Cemetery. Yet as far as we know, they never met each other, and those of us who knew one are unlikely to have known the other also. So it seems worth putting on record their two contributions, while noting with pleasure that both their widows have now become FOWNC members.

ERIC SMITH

The photograph shows Eric Smith in the Cemetery in 1979, sitting on one tomb, with another marble columned headstone behind him, and a fine decorated square tomb behind that. It seems almost appropriate - though shocking - that all three monuments have since been destroyed without trace. Sometime, we should be able to deduce where they stood.

Eric Smith was born in 1907, and spent most of his life in Mayford Road, Clapham. He became interested in Norwood Cemetery through the fascinating variety of prominent Clapham residents who were buried at Norwood: placed there not because Clapham was part of Lambeth (as it is now), but simply because it was the most prestigious Cemetery in South London.

Eric's detailed historical researches, particularly in Church history, resulted in his becoming a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. But throughout the 1970s and early 1980s he was constantly down at Norwood Cemetery, and bringing friends who recorded for him many of the monuments photographically. This resulted finally in an article on the Cemetery and its most eminent residents, published in the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society's 1979 Supplement on London. At the end of the article, and an Addendum to it published in 1980, he listed 144 prominent people buried at Norwood and mentioned in the Dictionary of National Biography. The articles are illustrated with many photographs of the finest tombs, and of the earlier Chapel buildings, now demolished. (A copy of these articles can be obtained from our Publications Officer, price £3 for the two.)

Eric became Secretary of the Clapham Antiquarian Society in 1937, and from then on, filled its Newsletter with historical items. Many of these were put together in "Clapham Saints and Sinners", published in 1987. More than half of those mentioned in this book appear to have been buried at Norwood, so it provides a very useful background for our own interests. (Now available from FOWNC, price £8.95).



But as well as this published research, Eric was going round Norwood, concentrating on squares about to be cleared by Lambeth. He recorded verbatim every inscription in the majority of the 125 squares: a monumental task which he completed in about 1980. We now have the notebooks in which they are recorded. But he then also transcribed the basic details onto cards, placed the names in alphabetical order, and finally put these several drawers of records in the hands of the Minet Library, where they are well looked after. He last visited the Cemetery in about 1982, but in 1985 he moved down to Tankerton, near Whitstable, where he died in 1990.

Since his death, no-one has had his knowledge of the Clapham aspect of the Cemetery, nor do we even know whether many of the tombstones of the Clapham worthies survive. It would be good if someone were to come forward to do the necessary research. Relying on Eric's work, this should not take too long, and we could then perhaps offer a tour of Clapham worthies, to go with our other five tours!



GEOFFREY MANNING

The photograph above shows Geoffrey visiting Sissinghurst in September 1988. Tragically, within three months he was dead from cancer. He lived in West Norwood (at 46 Cheviot Road) for many years, and conducted his first tour of Norwood Cemetery in 1983, and then from 1986 it became an annual, and almost embarrassingly well-supported event.

Geoffrey was born in 1927, and worked for many years for the GLC. (It was there he

met his future wife Audrey, in the Welfare Department.) He was a Lambeth Councillor in the early 1970s, and a JP for over ten years. He stepped in as Secretary of the Norwood Society in 1979, and remained a highly active officer for ten years. After taking early retirement from the GLC in 1984, he was able to devote more time to his local history interests, and started taking photographs in the Cemetery of all the 44 tombs listed in 1981. These, along with his notes about them, were published in 1989 by the Society. (Now available from FOWNC, price £2.25).

With hindsight, it was a good thing he took early retirement, as he only had five years to enjoy it. He was still efficiently carrying out his duties as Secretary of the Society just a few days before his death, on 26th January 1989, at the very early age of 62.

Geoffrey also made extensive notes about noteworthy people buried at Norwood, as well as several maps showing where their tombs lie. These notes were all placed by his widow in the hands of the Society, which has kindly made them available to the Friends. Without them, it would have been almost impossible to run the many tours we have put on since we started in 1989. His name is commemorated at Norwood by an attractive memorial seat at the top of the hill near the chapel.

WALKS IN THE NORWOOD AREA

The following walks have been arranged by the Norwood and Streatham Societies: all start at 2.30 pm. Please note that none of them clash with our own events. There's an obvious gap, of course: a walk around the suburb of West Norwood, last conducted knowledgeably by Geoffrey Manning. Whence comes such another?

SUNDAY 11 AUGUST

Around Streatham Hill. Leader: Derek West. Meet corner Brixton Hill and New Park Road.

SUNDAY 25 AUGUST

Down Greyhound Lane. Leader: Graham Gower. Meet 'The Greyhound', Streatham Common.

SUNDAY 1 SEPTEMBER

Norwood Grove and The Rookery. Leader: Brian Bloice. Meet corner Leigham Court Road and North Side, Streatham Common.

SUNDAY 15 SEPTEMBER

Walkabout in Stockwell. (Arranged by The Lambethans). Leader: Mr Alan Piper. Meet Stockwell Underground Station.



Friends of West Norwood Cemetery



FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

All events listed are open to the public.

NB Please put these dates in your diary now: we cannot promise to notify you again!

SUNDAY 18th AUGUST, at 2.30 pm.

TOUR OF CAMBERWELL OLD CEMETERY, to give us some idea of what would be lost if Southwark goes ahead with its plans for clearance (see last Newsletter). The Peckham Society has now expressed its concern over the clearance: more power to their elbow! Meet at Camberwell Cemetery entrance, near the junction of Wood Vale and Forest Hill Road, SE22. Further details from Margaret Frood: 071-732 7175.

SUNDAY 22nd SEPTEMBER, at 2.00 pm (please note earlier time).

Industrial Archaeology tour of Norwood Cemetery, concentrating on some of the eminent scientists and engineers buried at Norwood, but also including a visit to the Catacombs, which contain the unusual hydraulic lift from 1837. The tour is being organised for the Greater London I.A. Society, but our members are welcome to join in. Because of space, the tour of the catacombs will only be for people who are already members of GLIAS or FOWNC. Meet at 2 pm at the Cemetery entrance.

SATURDAY 28th SEPTEMBER, from 10 am to 4 pm.

Open Day at the Lambeth Archives, Minet Library, 52 Knatchbull Road, Camberwell SE5 (tel: 071-733 3279). We shall have our stall, of course, but also our Vice-Chairman, Bob Flanagan, will be talking about some of the many entertainers buried at Norwood. Ring Bob at 081-670 3265 for details of the time of his talk.

SUNDAY 27th OCTOBER, at 3 pm.

Talk about Famous Residents in Norwood Cemetery, given to Peckham Society by Nicholas Reed. St Johns Church Hall, East Dulwich Road, off Goose Green SE22.

SUNDAY 3rd NOVEMBER, at 11 am (please note earlier time).

ARTISTIC TOUR with a difference. No-one could hope to match the erudite artistic tours which used to be given by Patricia Jenkyns. But Nicholas Reed will be including many of the artists she described, as well as several monuments not previously visited, on this tour. Meet near the entrance.

SATURDAY 16th NOVEMBER, at 2.30 pm.

TWO DISTINGUISHED MEDALLISTS: illustrated talk by Philip Attwood. For details of this talk about William Wyon and Marie Cassavetti, see page 3 of this Newsletter. The meeting will be at a new venue: the Meeting Room in Chatsworth Baptist Church, Chatsworth Way, West Norwood SE27.

MONDAY 25th NOVEMBER, at 8pm.

Talk on BRIXTON WINDMILL. For details: see page 2 of this Newsletter.

MONTHLY TOURS of the Cemetery, meeting near the entrance.

The next three monthly tours will start at 2.30 pm on Sundays 4th August, 1st September, and 6th October. After that, those on Sunday 3rd November (artistic tour) and Sunday 1st December will start at 11 am, to suit the winter opening hours.

CEMETERY OPENING HOURS

A reminder that the opening hours are:

April to October: 8-6 weekdays, 10-6 weekends
November to March: 8-4 weekdays, 10-4 weekends